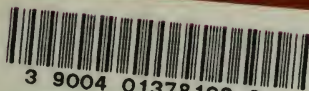


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SPEECH

DELIVERED BY THE

HON. J. W. JOHNSTON,

IN THE

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF NOVA SCOTIA,

ON THE 10th FEBRUARY, 1854,

On introducing Resolutions affirming the benefit of the Union or Confederation of the British North American Colonies; and recommending measures for inducing the consideration of the subject by the several Provincial Governments under sanction of the Imperial Authorities; and a recent

LETTER

Of that gentleman on the proposal to republish the Speech.

Our first, best Country ever is at Home.

HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED BY MACNAB & SHAFFER.

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Letter on Confederation.

HALIFAX, Feb. 27, 1865.

Sir,—The “Union League” have considered that it might be of benefit, under the present circumstances of the country, to publish a speech delivered by you in 1854 on the subject of a Union of the Colonies; but they do not feel at liberty to do so without your concurrence, as your sentiments may have undergone change since that period—in which case the republication might not be agreeable to you.

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

P. S. HAMILTON,

Acting Sec'y.

To His Honor the Judge in Equity.

HALIFAX, March 2, 1865.

My dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of a note from you in which, as acting Secretary of the Union League, you inform me that they think it might be of benefit under the present circumstances of the country to publish a speech delivered by me in 1854, on the subject of Union of the Colonies, but do not feel themselves at liberty to do so without my concurrence, as my sentiments may have undergone change since that period,—in which case the re-publication might not be agreeable to me.

The scheme for the Confederation of the British North American Provinces offers to their Legislatures a question of supreme importance, standing apart from party issues, and transcending temporary interests. In relation to such a subject, I see no occasion to hesitate in saying that my senti-

ments, as expressed in the speech delivered in 1854, have not been essentially changed, and that the re-publication will give me pleasure, if it will promote in any degree a measure so necessary as the Union of the Provinces.

Previously to that year, Canadian gentlemen had deliberated on Confederation, but the subject had not (as far as I know) been distinctly presented to any Provincial Legislature.

Under the influence of a long cherished belief that union was indispensable, if the British North American Colonies were to furnish a country where British people should attain a position and occupy a field of action essential to the expansion and elevation of political communities, I introduced the resolutions which the speech prefaced, with the purpose of keeping the important consideration before the public, and engaging attention to it in our sister colonies not less than in this province. In 1857, the subject was brought under the notice of the Colonial Secretary, in London, by Mr. Archibald and myself, under the authority of the Provincial Government, and for several years past it has, in varied forms, been presented to public notice in the Legislature and the press and on the platform in most of the Provinces, by leading public men without distinction. And it is a source of highest gratification that, after the long period since Lord Durham propounded the Union of these Colonies, that policy should meet the approval of the Imperial Government; and that a Minister of the British Cabinet should, in Parliament, now use in allusion to the present scheme of Confederation, and those who advocate it, such language as this:—

“They have conceived a noble ambition; they have designed to form, I venture to say, a nation, but not a nation divided from the allegiance they owe to the British Throne, nor separated from the institutions under which it is their pride to live; nor estranged from the associations and attachments that bind them to the Mother Country. In a spirit of the most fervent loyalty to the British Throne, in a close attachment to the British Crown, and in devotion to British institutions they have desired to form all the North American Provinces on the eastern coast into one Great Confederation.”

In judging of the probability of a Union of all the provinces being consummated the obstacle which ever seemed most formidable, was the indifference that might be expected, on the part of Canada, to unite with communities much feebler than

herself. Hence the Union of the maritime provinces was an object that appeared (though probably without reason) more easily attainable. It was a measure valuable in itself, and also as a means towards the ultimate and higher object; but was not the fulfilment of all the requirements of the case; for this the combination of the whole was requisite.

The apprehended indifference of Canada has been removed in a very striking and unexpected manner; but so far from seeing reason for prejudice against the measure, because Canada seeks Union from an appreciation of its benefits to herself, that fact would seem to be an element of strength in the compact.

Were this letter to be silent on the comparative schemes of legislative and confederate union, my sentiments would be liable to misapprehension, because in 1854 I expressed a strong preference for the former; but it will be seen that the resolutions then submitted, by leaving the choice between the two plans open for deliberation, excluded the idea that Legislative Union was deemed a *sine qua non*. The reasons which, in 1854, induced my preference for this form of Union, have lost none of their force; although I may not then have given quite as much consideration to the obstacles to its accomplishment as I have, since the question has come practically more near. Then, however, the necessity of supplying some mode for meeting the wants of the country, more convenient than legislation in a distant parliament, was felt; and it will be remembered that I introduced about the same time for this purpose, a Bill for the municipal incorporation of the counties, carefully elaborated from the best precedents I could procure. Its fortunes were inauspicious. The Legislature gave it but a dubious existence, making its operations dependant on acceptance by the counties. The counties courteously declined the boon of self-government it proffered; half a county alone accepted the gift, and after a few years rejected it.

Thus, unacceptable proved a measure which is essential should the perfect political amalgamation of the Provinces be effected; and it is probable that greater obstacles would be found opposed to Legislative than to Confederate Union.

But if, after Confederation, the Legislatures of the several Provinces should deem a closer connection desirable, the way would be as open then as now.

At present, however, the alternative is not before us. It is known that Legislative Union is impossible, and the comparison between the two systems is without object. The choice offered to the Legislature of the Province is :

On the one hand,—

Union under one government, giving to British subjects in their confederate and growing strength a nationality worthy of their origin, and a theatre of action such as national expansion demands ; where—acknowledging the sovereignty—maintaining the institutions—cultivating and perpetuating the principles of the parent state—and putting forth the energies of free men, they and their descendents may, under a gracious Providence, have the opportunity of rising to degrees of political influence, material prosperity, intellectual and literary attainment, religious, educational, and moral progress, and refinement of taste and manners, which cannot be reached in small and contracted communities.

On the other hand is—

The perpetuation of the present isolated condition of the province ; and rich as she is in material benefits, and prosperous within the limits which small communities may attain, yet few in numbers, weak in strength, unequal to the development of her own resources, unable to furnish to her sons professional education, or to retain at home her enterprising youth, she has little prospect for the future beyond a dwarfed existence and ultimate absorption into the neighboring republic.

One of these must be chosen, the other rejected. There is no other alternative. My sentiments formed and publicly advocated through a quarter of a century, leave me no room for deliberation now. To an old man, individually, any decision is of small moment ; but as a member of the community, in the exercise of my best judgment, on a question of vital interest to all of us and those who come after, I dare not deny a national existence with its privileges and duties to my descendants and my countrymen.

I therefore accept Confederation as a great benefit, whatever my tendencies in favor of Legislative Union, and though they were greater and more fixed than they are.

There is another point requiring explanation in connection with the re-publication of my speech.

The example of the United States was urged by me in '54 as strongly illustrative of the advantages of Confederation. The civil war that has since arisen, has been supposed to afford an argument in the opposite direction; but, as I think, without reason. If history can teach anything, no lesson is more plain than that taught by the great contrast between the imbecility of the United States, after their independance was acknowledged and the bond was dissolved that during the war had held them together, and their wonderful progress and power after the constitution was adopted by which they were united.

That, after three quarters of a century, when thirteen States had increased to thirty and three, and four millions of people had grown to thirty millions, a powerful section possessing individuality and extensive powers of State Legislation should desire separation, was quite within the operations of human passions and interests; and if it was necessary to meet this desire with cannon balls then the civil war might be an argument against all confederations. But a peaceful separation might have taken place; two prosperous states might have occupied the place held by one before; and in a few years the parent state renewed by natural increase and foreign accessions, have been prepared to give off—when the necessity arose—as it almost inevitably will arise—fresh offshoots, and become a mother of nations. The system of confederation would then have proved itself adapted for progression such as the world had never seen, and adapted equally, when reason and justice demanded it, for contraction. It must not therefore be charged with consequences which forbearance and a regard for justice and equal rights would have averted; and we may hope that if in distant time a great confederate nation of Britons should be placed in like circumstances, better regulated dispositions and the warning lessons of this terrible

civil war stamped on the page of history may lead to the happier result of peaceful adjustment, and the formation of new states.

The delegates have, I think, improved on the American model in the distribution of legislative powers, between the general and local Governments.

It being my purpose to do little more than make such explanations as the republication of my speech requires to prevent my being misunderstood, the details of the plan are not within the purpose of this letter. I may, however, say that, as far as I can judge, the scheme propounded manifests an earnest desire, with no small measure of success, to secure solidity and endurance to the constitution and harmony in its action and to do impartial justice among the constituent members, and I sensibly feel that the delegates have well earned the praise for moderation, fore-thought and ability in a case of great complication, delicacy and difficulty which has been freely accorded to them by the British Government, and in leading journals in England. It would not be surprising that some of the details should be liable to criticism, or to improvement. It would be surprising were it otherwise—the most perfect plan would not commend itself alike to all minds, and no plan can be perfect when diversified interests, prejudices, feelings, and judgments require to be accomodated and harmonized.

In a case of such momentous and enduring importance, it is well for each one, before touching the details, to settle firmly in his mind, the great question—ISOLATION or CONFEDERATION. If Confederation be thought beneficial, then the details will be considered in relation to the importance of the object to be attained, and the difficulties of adjusting conflicting views. Matters temporary, or comparatively inferior, or that may be subsequently adjusted, or that must be sacrificed for the sake of attaining the object, will not be allowed to disturb the judgment; and finally, it is a great security that the whole will undergo the scrutiny and revision of sagacious and far-seeing statesmen in England having no interest but the public good, aided by the local knowledge of able colonial public men.

This is no small affair, the influences of which will die away with the excitement of its discussion—no thing of petty politics, reaching no further than personal interests—no matter of party strife. Our country and its destinies, our descendants and their future, are the subjects—and the consideration should be approached with an earnestness, and the decision made under a sense of responsibility not to be exceeded in the most solemn religious duty.

I am, dear sir,

Very truly yours,

J. W. JOHNSTON.

To P. S. HAMILTON, Esq.

Chief Commissioner of Mines, &c.

ADDRESS
ON THE
UNION OF THE COLONIES,
DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, FEB. 10, 1854.

Hon. J. W. JOHNSTON said, Mr. Chairman, before availing myself of the privilege with which the House has indulged me of expressing my views on the Union of the British North American Colonies, permit me to read the Resolutions I propose to move.

I do this, Sir, that at the outset it may be seen to be my desire that the Imperial and Colonial Governments should be drawn to consider the great question, and to mould it after full deliberation into some form fit to be presented for the consideration of the several Legislatures ; and that I presume not at this stage of the enquiry to offer any specific scheme of my own.

The Resolutions are as follows :—

RESOLVED, That the union or confederation of the British North American Provinces, on just principles, while calculated to perpetuate their connexion with the parent state, will promote their advancement and prosperity, increase their strength and influence, and elevate their position.

RESOLVED, That His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor by address be respectfully requested to make known to her Majesty the Queen, and to the Governments of the sister Provinces of Canada, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, this opinion, and the desire of the House to promote the object ; and that His Excellency by correspondence with the Imperial and Provincial Governments, and by all means in His Excellency's power urge and facilitate the consideration of a measure, which if matured on principles satisfactory to the several Provinces and calculated to secure their harmony, and bring into action their consolidated strength, must result in lasting benefits of incalculable value.

Mr. Chairman, if the desire to improve his circumstances and raise his condition be a sentiment natural to a man, having under proper control beneficial effects upon the race—the same principle when applied to national elevation must rise to a higher order, and become a duty of greater obligation just as the ob-

ject is freer from selfishness and the benefits are more extensive and more enduring.

That the disposition and tendencies of nations are moulded and directed by their Government and institutions, is a truth which reason approves and nature confirms. Yet national characteristics being but the concentration of the prevailing propensities of individuals they become the reflex of each other, and alike derive tone and complexion from the habits of thought and feeling, and action engendered by the laws.

I do not forget that religion is the great minister—the effective agent in the amelioration of man, and the exaltation of nations. Yet do her influences like rays of light passing from one medium into another fall more or less directly and powerfully according to the moral atmosphere that surrounds the subjects of her action.

But, Sir, I freely admit that the obligations resulting from these truths are controlled by a duty no less plain,—which forbids needless alterations in the Government and laws. The occasions which call for fundamental changes should be grave and the conclusions, sought, free from reasonable doubt.

If therefore a view of the condition and prospects of the British N. A. Provinces does not justify the conviction that in all their relations, political and material, social and moral—their union is called for, or at least is a measure demanding deliberate examination, then, Sir, the objects for which I solicit the favor of the Committee are unwise and ought to be rejected promptly and decisively. But if the condition and prospects of these Colonies do force that conviction, then is it the duty of every man according to his influence and ability to be an instrument in urging the accomplishment of their union.

This is a question that reaches beyond the present moment and oversteps the boundaries of sectional claims. Not that I would be taken to mean that the palpable interests of the present are to be sacrificed to the visions of a distant and uncertain future; or any rights however small disregarded for the sake of theory and speculation. No, sir, the future of these Colonies that we have especially to deal with, is that which the shadows of the past distinctly portray; and which the analogies of nature, and the testimony of experience with clearness reveal; the interests to be sacrificed, if there shall be such are those that shall be compensated by larger benefits and greater good.

The adage that “Union is Strength,” and the homily illustrative of that adage in the bundle of sticks, lie at the foundation of the proposal before the Committee,—the beginning—the middle, and the end of the argument.

Hence they who oppose the measure should rightly assume

the burden of sustaining their views—unless there be something in the nature, situation, and circumstances of the several parties to be amalgamated, unsuited for effective union.

If nothing be found to show that the Provinces are unsuited for union, then the way is clear for the question ; and the comparison will present itself between,

The Provinces severed and dis-united, and

The Provinces combined and one.

In the preliminary enquiry, the obstacles to union, arising from distance, dissimilarity of race and habits—the difference in their public debt—opposing interests of trade and revenue—geographical obstructions—seem the most obvious and serious.

The impediments resulting from distance, and from the unhappy circumstances of both the Canadas, at the time, were those chiefly felt by Lord Durham in 1837, when the subject was discussed at Quebec by that distinguished and acute Statesman and his able advisers—among whom were the late Charles Boller, and Mr. Turton ; and the Delegates attending from the Provinces.

These impediments have passed away. Since that time Railroads have been introduced into Canada, and the time I believe will not be long before the works of the Grand Trunk Railroad Company will unite Sarnia on Lake Huron, with River De Loup on the banks of the St. Lawrence, below Quebec.

I hold in my hand a prospectus and plan of the vast undertakings of that Company.

Behold here their lines of Railways—running a distance of 1100 miles, and traversing the whole extent of Canada, by an unbroken line, and with an almost undeviating course, bringing the distant Huron nearly to the border of New Brunswick.

Still shorter will be the time that will suffice to show St. John connected by the iron road with Shediac. For this we have the high authority of Sir Edmund Head in his opening speech to the Legislature of New Brunswick, and I assume as an inevitable concomitant of the Union a continuation of the railroad from River de Loup to Halifax. Thus Montreal situated not very far from a central position, will be but a few days journey from the extremest points of the Provincial lines.

Since 1857 the almost magic power of the Electric Telegraph has been called into use, to annihilate time and distance in the communication of thought and intelligence :—and thus the objection from the distances that separate the inhabitants of these Provinces no longer offers any sound reason against their Union.

The condition of Upper and Lower Canada was in 1857 un-

able for Union—while the circumstances of these Colonies conduced to make a Union most desirable if not necessary.

Both Provinces still heaving and agitated under the effects of recent troubles, and divided into parties embittered by a struggle of no ordinary character, were in a condition the worst imaginable for adjusting a new constitution, or carrying a Union into operation.

Besides—differences in language, laws, habits, and modes of thinking and feeling—and the rivalry naturally growing out of these differences, placed an obstacle in the way of the Union of Lower Canada with the Upper or the Lower Provinces, which in the nature of things, is perhaps the most difficult to be overcome.

This barrier was not sufficient to prevent the amalgamation of the Canadas, and the successful result of that measure not only proves adequately that no dissimilarity that exists in the habits and feelings of different sections of the population of the various Provinces, is a just reason against entertaining the question of their Union; but affords encouragement to its extension to the other Provinces.

The geographical relations of the Colonies can I think be no hindrance.

The line separating Canada and New Brunswick creates no separation between the people inhabiting on either side. The Canadian inhabitants there have long found it to their advantage to deal principally with New Brunswick, and to avail themselves of the conveniences afforded by that fine river the St. John.

The people of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia (once united in the same Province) know no distinction.

Some of the finest portions of Nova Scotia,—Cumberland, Digby, Annapolis—parts of King, Hants, and Colechester, are more closely united by business relations with New Brunswick than with any part of their own Province,—while the north eastern coast of that Province—with resources of great value, derived alike from the land and the water, are drawn by the facilities of navigation to Halifax rather than to St. John.

The Gulf of St. Lawrence brings us all together. There Canada, New Brunswick, P. E. Island, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, and Newfoundland unite in encircling the estuary of the great river of the north, and there, as to a common centre, the traders from all the Colonies are every season brought together.

The hindrance to a Union which probably will be found the most difficult of removal will result from real or supposed differences of interest in relation to the regulation of commerce

and tariff. But if arrangements of this nature necessary for the common good, should oppose in some particulars the policy of a portion of the Union, it may well be supposed that more than compensation will be found in the advantage of a uniform system, embracing all the Colonies, and conferring on each the privileges and benefits of unfettered intercommunion which at present is not, and cannot easily, be enjoyed.

It does not however appear to be necessary or expedient to deal at large with this question now. If on general and enlarged views a Union be desirable or necessary, I cannot but think that all such questions will be found capable of a solution consonant with the general welfare—and besides they require to be brought into definite form after interchange of opinion and discussion among the several governments, before they can be practically dealt with in open debate in the Legislature.

The same remarks are applicable to the present disparity in the liabilities of the several Provinces, which I have made in reference to the disparity in the rates of their several tariffs, and supposed differences of commercial policy.

The debt of Canada is very large—but the works for which it was incurred remain; and her abundant revenues, after meeting the expenses of Government—the interest of her debt—the contingent of her sinking fund—and liberal allowance for education and other objects of public benefit—leave still a large surplus.

Lord Elgin's despatch, of the 16th August last, states the net revenue of 1852 to be greater than the expenditure including interest on public debt and sinking fund, by £188,553. Gentlemen may see the statistics at large, in the very useful compilation I have under my hand—Mr. Scobie's Canadian Almanac for the present year.

But, sir, when I reflect on the immense resources of Canada, I apprehend the obstructions to the Union may arise from causes very different from the fastidiousness of the Lower Colonies, in view of the Canadian debt.

Let us then assume that if the Union of the British North American Provinces be a measure calculated to consolidate their strength—improve their institutions—accelerate their progress, and promote their well-being—there exists no insuperable objection to that Union—either in the distance that separates—the diversities of races and of habits and sentiments—from geographical impediments, or financial or fiscal difficulties, or other causes of an individual nature.

This places us on the broad field of enquiry to which the subject invites. The difficulties are to select and arrange the materials within a reasonable compass, rather than to find matter for observation.

The Union of the Colonies of Great Britain in North America is a familiar idea, of which their history before and after the Revolution furnishes many instances.

As early as 1643 occurred the Confederation of the New England Colonies, and it is not uninteresting to notice the causes and the motives of that Union—by which, to use the language of the day, the Colonies of New England were “MADE ALL AS ONE.” Bancroft, from whom I quote, says —“Protection against the encroachment of the French and Dutch—security against the savages—the liberty of the gospel in peace, were the motives of the confederacy.”

The Union embraced Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven. Its affairs were conducted by Commissioners, two from each Colony, irrespective of their size or population. The Commissioners who were to meet annually, or oftener if necessary might deliberate on all things which are ‘the proper concomitants or consequents of a confederation.’ Peace and war, and especially Indian affairs, exclusively belonged to them—they were authorised to make internal improvements at the common charge, and they were the guardians to see equal and speedy justice to all the confederates. The common expenses were to be assessed according to the population. But the Commissioners were in reality little more than a deliberative body; they possessed no Executive power, and while they could decree a war, and a levy of troops, it remained for the Colonists, themselves to carry the vote into effect. “Thus remarkable”—Bancroft notices—“for unmixed simplicity was the form of the first federated Government in America.”

Among the active agents in forming this Union, and its first President, was Winthrop, Governor of Massachusetts—a name distinguished in the early annals of New England for the wisdom and virtue of its possessors—and which at the present day has been borne to situations of high elevation and made conspicuous by the integrity, ability and eloquence of the patriotic Statesman—and the refined taste of the scholar.

I refer to one known publicly to us all for the wisdom, and moderation of his course in Congress on the Oregon boundary question—while those who have the pleasure of his acquaintance personally have found him the courteous and urbane gentleman.

The next instance is the proposal of Wm. Penn in 1697, for an annual Congress of all the Provinces on the Continent of America, with power to regulate commerce—but which does not appear to have issued in any practical result.

This is followed at the distance of more than half a century by another proposal for Union which reached greater maturity, although it failed in ultimate adoption.

The celebrated Albany Convention is a well known historical fact, and I shall beg the attention of the committee to this case, both as showing the motives that incited to union at that time, and also for the purpose of enquiring at another stage of my argument into the probable effect that Union, had it gone into operation would have had on the connection between England and the Colonies, which not very long afterwards revolted from her sway.

The dread of approaching hostilities with France, and the necessity of increased contributions from the Colonies, induced high Colonial officials to entertain the idea and to desire to see it enforced by act of Parliament. Intelligent Colonists preferred a voluntary Union, and they used a significant argument—"It would be a strange thing if six nations of ignorant savages should be capable of forming a scheme for such an Union, and be able to execute it in such a manner as that it has subsisted for ages, and appears indissoluble, and yet that a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a dozen English Colonies, to whom it is more necessary, and must be more advantageous."

Reverses in contests with the French at length hastened forward the project; and at Albany to use the words of Bancroft "on the 19th Jan., 1794, assembled the memorable Congress of Commissioners from every Colony north of the Potomac.

"America had never seen an assembly so venerable for the States that were represented, or for the great and able men who composed it. Every voice declared a Union of all the Colonies to be absolutely necessary;" and it adds interest to this transaction, that at its commencement, the representatives of the six nations were present.

Franklin's project was the basis, and after great debate and deliberation was modified and adopted. Philadelphia was deemed conveniently situated for the site of the Federal government, because it could be reached from the most distant parts in 15 or 20 days.

The constitution was a compromise between the prerogative and popular power. The King was to name and support a Governor General, who should have a negative in all laws; the people of the Colonies, through their legislatures were to elect triennially a grand Council, which alone could originate bills. Each colony was to send a number of members, in proportion to its contributions, yet not less than two nor more than seven.

The Governor General was to nominate military officers, subject to the advice of the Council, which was to nominate all civil officers. No money was to be raised but by their

joint order. Each Colony was to retain its domestic constitution—the Federal Government was to regulate all relations of peace or war with the Indians; affairs of trade, and purchases of lands not within the bounds of particular Colonies: to establish, organize, and temporarily to form new settlements; to raise soldiers, and equip vessels of force on the seas, rivers, and lakes, to make laws, and levy just and equal taxes. The Grand Council were to meet once a year; to choose their own Speaker, and neither to be dissolved, nor prorogued, nor continue to sit more than six weeks at any one time but by their own consent.

“The Board of Trade,” adds Bancroft, “on receiving the minutes of the Congress was astonished at a plan of general Government, complete in itself. Reflecting men in England dreaded American Union as the keystone of independence.”

It is well worthy of note that Franklin’s mind took a wider range, and comprehended “the great country back of the Apalachian Mountains,” where he predicted in less than a century would grow up a populous and powerful dominion; and through Thos. Pownell, who had been present during the deliberations at Albany, he advised the immediate organization of two new Colonies in the West.

The whole of this transaction offers so much incident for reflection and application, that I make no apology for presenting it so much at large to the Committee.

This was the scheme devised by wise and practical men for protection against foreign invasion, and for internal improvement.

England rejected it, and reflective men there, as Bancroft says, were jealous lest it should lead to the independence of the Colonies.

May we not well doubt the reasonableness of the apprehension; as surely we may question the liberality and generosity, and I will add the justice of the principle that sought to keep the Colonies weak that they might be preserved dependent.

Let it be remarked that the thirteen Colonies whose Union was projected, contained at that time less than one million and a half of people, including the coloured population.

I reserve, as illustrative of a later part of my argument, the Union of the American States after their independence; and now take up Lord Durham’s report of 31st Jan., 1839.

In this we find that in 1814, the project of a Union of the North American Colonies had been formed by the late Chief Justice Sewall of Lower Canada; and by him submitted to his late Royal Highness the Duke of Kent—the father of our Sovereign—and approved by that Prince, whose personal

knowledge of these Colonies, and whose deep interest in their welfare are well known facts.

The report of Lord Durham gives the Duke's letter in answer to Chief Justice Sewell's proposal. So interesting a document, coming from such a quarter, the House will excuse me for reading:—

“Kensington Palace. November 16th 1814.

“MY DEAR SEWELL:—I have this day had the pleasure of receiving your note of yesterday, with its enclosure; nothing can be better arranged than the whole thing is, or more perfectly I cannot wish; and when I see an opening, it is fully my intention to hint the matter to Lord Bathurst, and put the paper into his hands, without, however, telling him from whom I have it, though I shall urge him to have some conversation with you relative to it. Permit me, however, just to ask you whether it was not an oversight in you to state that there are five Houses of Assembly in the British Colonies in North America, for if I am not under an error, there are six, viz: Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the Islands of Prince Edward and Cape Breton. Allow me also to beg of you to put down the proportions in which you think the 30 members of the Representative Assembly ought to be furnished by each Province; and to suggest whether you would not think two Lieut. Governors, with two Executive Councils sufficient for the Executive Government of the whole, viz: one for the two Canadas, and one for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, comprehending the small dependencies of Cape Breton and Prince Edward's Island; the former to reside at Montreal, and the latter at whichever of the two situations may be considered most central for the two Provinces, whether Annapolis Royal or Windsor. But at all events, should you even consider four Executive Governments and four Executive Councils requisite I presume there cannot be a question of the expediency of comprehending the two small Islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence with Nova Scotia.

EDWARD.”

Lord Durham's report has been in every body's hand and need only be referred to. That able statesman believed a Union of the North American Colonies to be most desirable for their progress and advancement, and after much deliberation, and it would seem some change of opinion, adopted the conclusion that the Union should be legislative, and complete to secure the full attainment of its advantages. The reasons by which his Lordship's views are sustained are given succinctly, but powerfully in the report. So clearly and conclusively indeed that it seems as if the best advocacy of the measure might be confined to the reading of those passages of His Lordship's report which relate to this point.

Next and last in the order of time, is the scheme of the British American League, adopted at its second Convention at Toronto in November, 1849. I hold in my hand a full report of the speeches and proceedings on that occasion, and I may say that the knowledge, ability, and eloquence, displayed well entitle to our respectful consideration, the opinions of the gentle-

men who adopted the conclusion that a Union of all the Provinces was desirable and proper. They were strong in numbers as in talent—of varied engagements in life, and being selected from all parts of the Province may be considered as expressing sentiments widely diffused.

The plan they agreed to submit for the consideration of the Provinces is set out in detail, and occupied considerable space. I will notice the leading portions.

The Canadas, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P. E. Island, and Newfoundland, to be joined in a Federal Union under the name of British North America—with a Secretary, and office in Downing Street—and a Vice Regent, and Federal Legislature.

Each Province to have its local Legislature, the Legislative Council of which to be elected.

The Federal Government to be vested in a Vice Regent or Governor General—a Legislative Council appointed by the Crown, or elected by the Legislature of the Provinces, for six years, one-third returning every second year,—and an Assembly chosen by the Provincial Legislatures from their own members, or by a special election—a deputation of members from the Legislative Council, and from the House of Assembly to have seats in the House of Commons.

The powers of the General Government were to be the imposition of taxes, duties, and imports, which should be uniform throughout the Province—to assume and pay the debts of the several Provinces, and provide for the peace and welfare of the Union—to establish uniform commercial regulations between the different Provinces and foreign countries, not repugnant to the laws of the United Kingdom—determine disputes—regulate navigation of the Rivers and lakes—promote internal improvements—regulate Post Office—militia, &c. A Supreme Court, being also a Court of Appeals, &c., &c. A subsequent resolution passed against the election of the Legislative Council.

Here is presented a scheme of confederation, evidently prepared with care, and worthy of consideration, which it is to be regretted had not been pressed upon the notice of the different Provinces.

I turn next, sir, to a significant and pregnant example drawn from the history of the United States, after their independence, of the necessity of an Union of an energetic character, for the prosperity and advancement of communities bearing many resemblances to the British North American Provinces—and if history be philosophy teaching by example, the lesson will probably be not uninstructional.

Examine the condition and prosperity of the States collectively after the peace that ensured their independence, and we

are presented with a lamentable picture of national weakness—both material and moral.

Look at their present national greatness. Then trace the causes of each result and we can, I think, be at no loss to make the application to our present subject.

Language could scarcely be stronger than that used to describe the ruinous effects of the weakness of the confederation that bound the States together after the peace—as may be seen on reference to Marshall's *Life of Washington*, from which I quote on this point :—

Washington earnestly deprecated these consequences, and urged as the only remedy increased confederative powers. He felt very strongly this necessity in relation to the commercial arrangements necessary for the national interests, and the redemption of debts contracted during the war, essential for the national honor. “America” he said, “must appear in a very contemptible point of view to those with whom she is endeavoring to form commercial treaties, without possessing the means of carrying them into effect,” and in other aspects of the case his expressions are not less forcible.

La Fayette, the friend of America and of Washington gives the opinion entertained in Europe :—

“I have often,” he says, “had the mortification to hear that the want of power in Congress, of Union between the States, of energy in the Government, would make the Confederation very insignificant.”

The testimony of the historian is no less clear and positive. Marshall's language is thus strong :—

“That the imbecility of the Federal Government—the impotence of its requisitions—and the inattention of some of the States to its recommendations, would in the estimation of the world, abase the American character, could scarcely be termed a prediction. From its inability to protect the general interest, or to comply with its political or pecuniary engagements, already had that course of national degradation commenced, which such a state of things must necessarily produce.”

Again, he says :—“The Confederation was apparently expiring from mere debility. The last hopes of its friends having been destroyed, the vital necessity of some measure which might prevent the separation of the integral parts of which the American Empire was composed became apparent even to those who had been unwilling to perceive it.”

Such then was the condition of the American confederation after their independence had been achieved by sacrifices, self-denial, and fortitude that all must admire, whatever opinion as to the merits of the contest may be entertained.

What are the United States now? This map answers the question. Nearly half in superficial extent of the northern continent is embraced within their limits—an ocean is the territorial limit on either side, the Gulf of Mexico on the South—British soil on the north—and 25 millions of people occupy and own this vast domain.

Harper's Magazine for last month contains a very impressive review and comparison of the several census taken in the United States since 1790.

On the population and territory the article descants in a tone high indeed, but warranted by the facts. We are told that the law of growth has been remarkably uniform, In 60 years it varied but little from 34 per cent :—in 10 years, and assuming $33\frac{1}{2}$ as the decimal increase for the next half century, at the end of another 60 years the Republic will contain one hundred and thirty millions of people. Its territorial extents is stated at nearly ten times the size of Great Britain and France combined:—three times that of the whole of France, Britain, Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland and Denmark together, &c., &c.

It would sir, be as vain as ignoble to attempt to decry the national position of the United States. America stands high among the nations; and vigorous in youth—pressing onward and upward, well may her sons be dazzled in the prospection of her destiny. Year after year the wilderness retires before the energy and endurance of her people; and her commerce spreads more widely over every sea. Her *Ægis* guards her humblest citizen in the remotest lands, until the title of an American citizen is as secure a passport as of old was that of Roman.

What has achieved this great result?—Union—effective, confederate Union.

Would it have been thus had the state of imbecile and imperfect confederation continued, that La Fayette deplored, and Washington mourned over, reprov'd and redressed?

Assuredly not.

Let it be remembered that when Washington showed the evils of disunion on the commercial relations of his country her population did not very greatly exceed that of the British North American colonies at the present day.

The dissimilarities in the circumstances of the United States, and the British Colonies, do not, I think, prevent the application of this example. Foreign negotiation was necessary for the commercial arrangements required by the United States, and with us the Imperial Parliament exercises this duty. But it is clear that the commercial relations of the Provinces will demand a special consideration controlled by their own circum-

stances and interests; and Union may be found requisite to give efficacy to these considerations.

The subject naturally leads to the enquiry whether the North American Provinces possess a strength and capacity suited for Union.

Scotland in 1707 at the Union, had a population of about 1,050,000.

Ireland in 1821,—29 years after her Union—a population of not 7 million—probably at the Union not more than 4 million.

The thirteen Provinces previous to the Revolutionary war, afford, however, the best materials for comparison.

In thinking of their strength and condition we are apt to be misled by what they achieved in a struggle—for a time unassisted—with a powerful nation,—as well as by what they had before done in the wars with the French and Indians.

Franklin in his examination in 1766 before the House of Commons declared that in the French war the Colonies had raised, clothed, and paid 25,000 men, and spent many millions—and that Pennsylvania alone disbursed £500,000.

Yet he rated the number of men from 16 to 60 years of age in British North America at about 300,000, and estimated that the inhabitants of all the Provinces at a medium doubled in 25 years. In Pennsylvania the taxes annually realized, he said, about £25,000,—and her imports from Great Britain amounted to £500,000, and exports thither to 40,000.

The whole population of the thirteen Colonies at the beginning of the Revolution did not exceed $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions, and in 1770 it had not reached 4 millions—a very small advance for the number of years.

Bancroft describes them thus:—

“Yet the thirteen Colonies in whom was involved the futurity of our race were feeble settlements in the wilderness, scattered along the coast of a Continent, little connected with each other, little heeded by their metropolis, almost unknown to the world. They were bound together only as British America, that part of the Western hemisphere which the English mind had appropriated. England was the mother of its language, the home of its traditions, the source of its laws and the land on which its affections centred.

And yet it was an offset from England rather than an integral part of it; an Empire of itself, free from nobility and prelacy, not only Protestant, but by a vast majority dissenting from the Church of England; attracting the commoners and plebean sects of the parent country and rendered cosmopolitan by recruits from the nations of the European Continent. By the benignity of the law, the natives of other lands were re-

ceived as citizens ; and political liberty as a birthright, was the talisman that harmoniously blended all differences, and inspired a new public life, dearer than their native tongue, their memories, and their kindred. Dutch, French, Swede and German renounced their nationality to claim the rights of Englishmen."

The present population, and revenue and trade of the British North American Provinces greatly exceed that of the thirteen Colonies at the Revolution. Taking the result of the last census in each Province, we have the following statement of population :—

Population of British North American Colonies, from Hunt's Magazine, January, 1854 page 181.

Year.	Provinces.	Population.	Sq. Miles.
1852,	Upper Canada	953,239,	147,832.
1852,	Lower Canada	890,261,	201,939.
1851,	New Brunswick	193,800,	27,700.
1851,	Nova Scotia	276,117,	18,746.
1851,	P. E. Island	62,678,	2,134.
		<hr/>	
1852,	Newfoundland	2,376,095.	
		101,600,	57,000.
1851,	Hudson's Bay Territory	180,000,	2,500,000.
1851,	Labrador	5,000,	170,000.
		<hr/>	
		2,662,695,	3,125,401.
Population of the Canadas to a square mile			7
do New Brunswick	to do		4
do Nova Scotia	to do		19
do P. E. Island	to do		25
do Newfoundland	about		2

The population may now be fairly taken at 3 millions.

For the rate of increase in the Canadas, I avail myself of two lectures of the Rev. Adam Lisle, before the Mechanics' Institute, Toronto, in Feb. 1852, in which with much research and ability the Rev. gentleman has triumphantly vindicated Canadian as compared with United States progress.

A single passage will serve my present purpose :—

"Taking Canada as a whole, its population has increased from 60,000 to 1,582,000 in 70 years. Hence in 1850 it was over 26 times what it was in 1760;—more considerably than $2\frac{1}{2}$ times what it was in 1825, when it numbered 581,657."

Thus the increase in 25 years is over a million, or about 68 per cent. in 10 years. We have seen that the present decimal increase of the United States is $33\frac{1}{2}$ —much beneath that of Canada.

Looking forward for a quarter of a century, the population of the North American Colonies may be assumed

to reach over 7 millions, and in another quarter to be pressing on to 18 millions.

As to territory we have but again to look to the map to perceive that vast as is the extent of the United States, the British domain exceeds it,—and although much of this large territory lies in the inhospitable region of the north, yet more than enough for accumulated millions of people remains of lands of the best quality for settlement. The extent of the several Colonial limits I have already stated ; and beyond Canada to the West onward to the Pacific and Vancouver's Island lies a vast country destined to be the home of multitudes.

Aware that a gentleman among us, distinguished by his benevolent regard for the aboriginal inhabitants of Nova Scotia, and his earnest efforts to preserve from destruction our river fisheries, had under the influence of an energetic spirit, an enquiring mind, and the indomitable zeal of an ardent and scientific sportsman, crossed the American Continent, and visited the coasts of the Pacific, I sought information from him as regards the country to which I have last alluded.

Although his observation has been chiefly confined to the United States side of the line, yet he crossed over to Vancouver's Island, and had some knowledge of the coast of the British territory extending to the northward.

Capt. Chearnley, whom the Committee will recognise as the gentleman to whom I have made reference, has kindly favored me with information which cannot fail to be interesting. At Vancouver's Island the soil is good, and the country in every way adapted for settlement—the vegetables were of superior size and quality, and he witnessed the importation of cattle, intended to be turned out for breeding, and there coal abounds.

Nisqually, at the South East extremity of the Straits of St. Juan de Fuca was highly esteemed for Sheep farming, and he there saw an establishment of the Hudson Bay Company at which was probably not less than 3000 sheep, tended by men from the old country.

The Salmon Fishery was of boundless productiveness, and fish of great size were ordinarily sold by the Indians for the most insignificant price—a leaf of tobacco purchasing a large Salmon.—From what he saw of the Oregon territory where Wheat of the finest quality is grown, and forests of magnificent pines abound, he had no doubt that across the line on the British side the Country which he did not visit would present similar characteristics.

But, Sir, it is needless to pursue these observations. The Crown of England possesses territory enough in North America to occupy centuries in filling up, and to give space for many national communities.

Confining ourselves to what has been allotted to the provinces, the field is large enough to exercise the most ardent imagination in the vision of the future.

In view of the increase and trade of the Colonies, the facts are more than sufficient for the argument.

The present revenues of the several Provinces may be set down at $1\frac{1}{4}$ million.

In 1852 Canada was	723,720
In 1853 New Brunswick, was	180,554
In 1853 Nova Scotia, say	120,000

The Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland revenues and the increase on the Canadian will probably bring the amount not much below the sum I have named.

Two years ago the imports of the five Colonies reached £8,000,000 and the exports exceeded £5,000,000.

In the Halifax *Sun* a few weeks ago, the imports in 1852 are said to have reached £5,720,000, the tons of Shipping built 112,878—not much under half the amount in the United States; and the tons of Shipping owned, half a million, exceeded only by England and the United States.

In view of all these facts it may be assumed that the British North American Colonies possess a strength in population, territory, commerce and material resources that entitle them to a higher national position than they occupy, and that would justify their union as the means for attaining that position.

I shall therefore proceed to offer some remarks on the motives to union in addition to what has already been incidentally said.

The Union may be presented in a two-fold aspect:—

The benefits it will yield.

The evils it will avert.

Looking at each Colony as possessed of some advantages—some resources peculiar to itself, it seems a conclusion almost inevitable and self-evident, that combination must increase their effectiveness; and that the whole, developed and directed by one governing power, representing all the Colonies, must produce a result greater than the aggregate of product under the separate unassisted agency of each separate Colony. As an example—Nova Scotia, with her eastwardly position, and excellent harbors, offering the first stopping place in the navigation between Europe and America—surrounded on every side by the sea, or extensive bays—furnishing great facilities for commerce and navigation—possessing unrivalled mines of wealth, in fisheries and minerals—needs a field larger, a strength greater than her own to give full efficacy to these elements of advancement.

Canada—vast in her dimensions—unexcelled in her agricultural powers—equal to unlimited immigration—and teeming with the materials and means of progress, almost without a precedent—is shut out from navigable communication with the sea, by the rigors of winter for a large portion of the year.

Without Union, the Colonies will not minister as they might, to each other's benefit. At present they feel not the disposition; if they would, they cannot without an united government, and a common system and policy.

The small interest felt in each other by the Colonies would be almost incredible to strangers. They confound us as one. We as communities are not only several in fact but in feeling.

Union giving us a common interest, and making us fellow-workers in advancing that interest, would remedy this great evil; and an uniform system would remove impediments, which the regulations and partial interests of the Colonies will, while separate, ever be presenting.

If it be objected that Union would be distracted by opposing interests, I answer that Union is not anticipated except on the basis of mutual benefit, and the assumption that no large interest would be sacrificed.

If again it be urged that the United States afford to the Colonies many of the facilities that are presented as reasons for Union; the reply is—that to a large extent that is impossible—that as far as the fact does extend, the *continuance* cannot be relied on,—and above all that one of the chief objects of union is to concentrate colonial interests and to augment colonial strength, and thereby avert the otherwise inevitable consequences of gradual absorption into that republic; which I believe must result from keeping our interests detached, while each Colony is gradually drawing itself closer to the United States.

It is impossible to enter into details—the occasion permits only the consideration of general principles:—and on general principles I cannot but assume that the balance of good as regards each portion of the Union would predominate over partial inconvenience.

Rising to a higher point of view—and turning from the influence of Union on the internal improvements of the Colonies, to the effects of the Union in external aspects—the relation of the Colonies to Great Britain and to the United States present themselves as the principal subjects of consideration.

In these relations the weakness of the Colonies—separate; their strength, united, present a contrast that strikes the mind instantly and with irresistible force. This contrast gathers power as it is carried forward, and let it not be forgotten that

undeviating smoothness in the progress of events as little characterises the existence of communities as of individuals.

Times will come and occasion will arise when these Colonies in whole or in part will find emergencies demanding all their strength and forcing to united efforts, when perhaps the opportunity and means of effective Union may be wanting.

We may find some illustrations at the present time, in the cases of the navigation of the St. Lawrence, sought by the United States—reciprocal trade between the Colonies and the United States—and the fisheries on our coasts.

United, the Colonies would have a common interest, sustained by consolidated strength, and promoted by undivided counsel. Divided, each pursues its own views, on its own strength, and according to its own judgment, possibly at conflict with the others, and it may be with results at the moment considered for the benefit of one, but which had an united interest compelled to more enlarged views, would have been rejected by all.

Let us consider for a few moments the case of the fisheries which peculiarly effects us in Nova Scotia.

Within the limits of three Marine miles the coasts of Nova Scotia abound with fisheries of incalculable value. The law of nations and sanctions of treaties give to the Queen's subjects as clear a right to their exclusive enjoyment as they have to any merely territorial possession; and this right is essentially colonial, because its enjoyment is inseparably incident to colonial residence. Yet it may be that at this very moment this birth-right and property of Colonists is being the subject of treaty and of traffic at Washington—nay they may already have been surrendered for some partial compensation, adding insult to wrong. I will not say that Nova Scotia has not been consulted; but has her voice been invited or been heard as the voice of a free people ought in such a matter?

Who has most influence in this affair—the manufacturers of Manchester—sustained by a parliamentary host, on Her Majesty's loyal subjects of Nova Scotia, unaided by one vote—whose geographical position, if not existence, is, it may be, unknown to one half the assembled Commons of the Parent State.

If it shall be said that exclusive possession requires protection against encroachment beyond what we can afford, I might in the present relations of the Colonies question the conclusion. But admit its correctness. It is the consciousness of this weakness that prompts me. From this injurious imbecility I would see my country delivered by an Union that would give the North American Colonies in matters affecting themselves

a prospect of having weight proportioned to their rights in the Councils of the Empire, and in the deliberations of foreign States. I would see it raised to the dignity and possessed of the ability of contributing towards expenditures incurred for its benefit. I attempt not to conceal the fact that the United Colonies would be called to assume burdens and responsibilities greater than they have yet been accustomed to. No! Enlarged privileges must bring increased obligations, and no man worthy of the name would evade the privileges of manhood that he might escape its duties.

It may be objected that interests prized by some Colonies would be lightly esteemed by others:—Canada for instance may be supposed to care little for our fisheries. The answer is that what promotes the common welfare cannot be presumed to be disregarded by any of the members of the Union; and that what is valuable to one is an accession to the general stock, not likely to be inconsiderately sacrificed by their United Government,

But, however this might be, if any surrender should be made after due deliberation by the Supreme Colonial Government, none—dissatisfied though they might be with the act of their own Government—could complain that their rights had been disregarded, without having enjoyed the privilege of constitutionally vindicating their claims;—and they would be relieved from the humiliating consideration so often forced upon them in their present condition.

No part of this subject is in my mind more important than the bearing it has on the systems of government and administration of justice, especially in the smaller Colonies. The consequences affect society in its vital interest—the moral sentiment of a people.

How far the artificial system of administration, through a parliamentary majority, as in England, is well adapted to any country free from the complications of an Imperial state, and ancient institutions it is not necessary to enquire—as I assume the Government of the United Colonies, if a *Legislative Union* should be effected, would be modelled after the British form.—But quite sure I am that for a Colony with a small population, scattered thinly over its surface—a large proportion of them scantily educated—having no men of leisure—comparatively few of much wealth, and still fewer distinguished by literary attainments, such a system of administration is unsuited alike to the moral elevation and to the material progress of the people.

That it is British proves nothing, unless to prepare us to expect that what suits a country circumstanced as England would not be fitted for communities such as ours. *There exist the op-*

posite principles of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, and there too are large classes of landholders, and men of property, whose interest is alive to preserve the balance necessary for the security of the State ; while learning, refinement, and leisure abound to assist the interests of property in creating, fostering, and preserving those sentiments of public virtue, essential for the well-being of society, and in guarding against and checking the abuses and corruptions to which governments are prone.

Hence a public opinion, which through the medium of a free press, is able alike to control the Crown, Nobles, Parliament, Statesmen, and the People, when strong occasion calls it forth. In such a country conflicting elements require to be combined, harmonised, and kept in check, and the means exist to effect that object. But *here* we have not and cannot have the presence of the influence of monarchy or nobility, and all attempts at imitation will but produce spurious and incongruous results. We have and can have but one element of Government—the democratic, and that it is our interest so to regulate and check as to create and preserve a simple, an incorrupt, and an economic system of government.

The great want in a small community such as Nova Scotia, under the system of Government instituted among us, is the free working of a healthy public opinion. The party divisions which will exist under this system, and which indeed may be deemed necessary for its effective operation, leave no middle class to adjust the scale and check the violation of public faith and personal honor in public men ; and the circumstances of the country furnish not men of education and leisure adequate to control and direct the public sentiment.

We have but to examine the system in its operation—to trace the influences of the Executive on the Legislature, and of the Legislature on the Executive, and of both on the people to perceive that its tendencies are to imbecility of Executive action, to defective Legislation, and above all to corruption ; and that there exists no influence to stay the evils.

It was my intention to have gone into this branch of the subject more largely but I pass over my notes on this topic—because I shall without further enlargement more than sufficiently occupy the time of the house, and tax its patience, and because I might awaken feelings opposed to the calmness essential to the proper consideration of the question before us.

The evils to which I have alluded must reach the administration of justice, and gradually, but inevitably deteriorate the intelligence and professional knowledge and the independence of the Judges, not only because the system makes to a considerable extent political position the path to the Bench, but

because the causes that lead to the toleration of corruption in private and public men, will be fruitful of evil throughout society in all its relations.

The Union of the Provinces, with one general government would at least diminish the evil consequences inevitable in communities too small—too poor—too little advanced for the advantageous exercise of the system.

A wider field would give greater scope to the aspiring, and larger, and perhaps more generous influences would be required for success. Party action operating in an extended circle would become less personal in its nature, and be consequently mitigated in its acrimony, and less powerful in suppressing a wholesome public opinion.

There is another consideration not yet touched, but which lies deep in the foundations of the subject, and pervades it in all its relations, awakening emotions too powerful not to make themselves practically operative—the anomalous position of a Colonist.

The Englishman, Scotchman and Irishman has a country by which he call himself, and claims a nationality that commands respect.

The United States citizen has a national character that is a passport over the world. The eagle of his country follows him in the remotest regions, and he is sure of the vindication of his violated rights at all hazards and any expenditure.

The Colonial subject of Great Britain may indeed find similar protection and redress in the case of flagrant wrong. But his national standing as he realizes it in the ordinary occurrences of life, is dubious and unsatisfactory.

Let him go to England and he perhaps discovers his cherished home to be there an unknown land, or in some strange geographical confusion confounded with distant and unconnected places; and when his countrymen have clearly ascertained the fact that he is indeed a Colonist, he perceives that he has sunk in estimation, and that he occupies in their consideration a standing of inferior order to that accorded to the citizens of the United States, or other subjects of a foreign State. It fares not much better with him any where else. He carries nowhere a recognized name or acknowledged national character.

It is true communities as well as individuals may be virtuous and happy in secluded and inferior stations; but in this age of progress and of change, those who are pressing on our footsteps, and will presently occupy our places, and for whom it is our duty to think and to act, will not be contented to hold the equivocal and hybrid relation of Colonists, unless

their own standing shall become elevated, and shall give them an acknowledged name and at least a quasi nationality. This the United Provinces of British North America, by whatever name denominated, are able to do.

This leads to a different branch of the subject—the influence which the Union of the North American Colonies would have in their connection with the parent State.

I cannot perceive that the form which the inhabitants of a Colony may prefer as best suited for the management of their own affairs can of itself affect their relations with the Imperial State; still less than ever now that the principle of Colonial self-government is clearly acknowledged and practically adopted.

The mode in which the Colonies expand and advance toward maturity, leaves untouched the principle on which the Colonial relation depends, and in proportion to their happiness and prosperity would naturally be their reluctance to dissolve a connection fruitful of results so desirable, while their increasing strength and importance would give them a weight and consideration in the councils of the Empire, that would render improbable any unhappy and injudicious interferences with their rights; and so avert the causes of dissatisfaction.

It is interesting in this view to look back upon the past. Some of the Colonies in their early history received constitutions so independent as to be quite startling, in contrast with the policy in after years advanced by the British Government. The American historian tells us that “in Pennsylvania human rights were respected. The fundamental law of Wm. Penn, even his detractors concede, was in harmony with universal reason, and true to the ancient and just liberties of the people.”

But Connecticut as early as 1662 presents the most peculiar spectacle in this respect. The charter of that State created a simple democracy, and gave to the people, without reference to, or control by the Imperial Government, the unmodified power to elect all officers, enact laws, administer justice, inflict punishments, and pardon offences; and “in a word to exercise every power deliberative and executive;” and yet this charter was granted by Charles II. It is true it emanated from no just principle on his part; but from the unusual coincidence that the favorite (a Winthrop) whom he desired to reward, was a man of a noble nature, who unlike the ordinary recipients of Royal bounty, sought not the advancement of his own fortunes, but the benefit of his country.—Still the fact that nearly two centuries ago such powers of Colonial self-government were not imagined to infringe Colonial dependence may make those pause, who in the present advanced state of

political science, see in the Union of the North American Colonies danger to British connection.

It may be said that these instances are not happy illustrations of my argument, seeing that revolt and separation followed. Long previously, however, the early charters had been violated, and practices introduced and claims advanced inconsistent with their principles.

Who that regards the earnest desire to avert separation, which at first animated many of the most distinguished actors in the American revolution, will venture to declare that revolt and separation would have ensued had the principles of early charters never been interfered with.

Suppose again that the Albany Union had been effected, under the sanction of the British Government:—May it not be questioned whether even capricious, and inconsiderate and obstinate statesmen would have urged the same claims—acknowledged now to have been arbitrary and unconstitutional—upon the thirteen Colonies compact and strong in Union, which it was illadvisedly thought might safely be ventured upon with separate Colonies, weak in themselves, and apparently without the elements of consolidated power. This revolt and separation that union might—humanly speaking it, probably would—have been averted.

Let me not forget one significant fact.—Not only has the Union of the British North American Colonies been advocated by able British Statesmen, but we have seen that it was a subject of mature consideration and found favor with a Prince of the blood—the father of our revered sovereign. *He* could have seen in it no tendencies to rend an Empire, the maintenance of whose undiminished glory and power, must have been so dear to him.

Before leaving this portion of the subject I feel myself constrained to express a sentiment, which I hope will not be misapprehended or misapplied.

If an Union be necessary for the happiness and prosperity of these Colonies, it is no legitimate ground for withholding it, that it may possibly tend to a severance of the connexion with the parent State. Justice demands alike from Imperial and Colonial Statesmen that on such a question, the primary—the controlling consideration should be the essential and permanent well-being of the Colonies.

It only remains that a few words should be said on the nature of the Union. This may be either by 1st, Confederation: or 2ndly by Legislative Union, including the Lower Provinces, with confederation with Canada.

In all the instances I have quoted, we do not meet with the

scheme of Legislative Union until Lord Durham's Report in 1838, and therefore example favors confederation.

I stated at the outset that I did not think this was the time to spend much consideration on details ; but though the mode of Union is hardly the question for present deliberation, I will not here withhold my strong conviction that a Legislative Union would best promote the common interests, and the objects to be attained.

But with this there must be connected a mature and perfect system of Municipal Corporations—giving to the people in every country not only the entire control and management of their own immediate affairs, but much which is now the subject of Legislative and Executive functions.

Thus in the concentrated strength and energy and progress of these Colonies—in an enlarged and more wholesome public opinion—a wider range for talent, and more extended scope for the aspirations of ambition, might be found a remedy for the evils that seem inseparable from the condition of Colonists at present ; and a theatre of action for British subjects be prepared, worthy of British energy and suited to British feelings.

I cannot conclude, Mr. Chairman, without acknowledging how far short I feel I have fallen of the capacity of the subject—I will not say of its requirements, for the measure I have advocated needs little aid of argument or of eloquence. The principle on which it rests is so simple—so truthful—so practical—so acknowledged—that argument and eloquence seem superfluous.

Union is strength—reason, philosophy and experience declare, illustrate and confirm the truth. Religion and civilization demand its aid.

It upholds the sovereignty which God has given to man over creation, and is the basis on which rests all the agencies for fulfilling the Creator's designs for the amelioration of our race.

Supported on this principle, the question seems no longer open to debate, so soon as the practicability of Union is affirmed. And yet the subject affords ample scope for reasoning the most rigid, and eloquence the most exciting. Hence at one moment the mind is embarrassed to find valid objections to oppose—at another oppressed by emotions difficult to utter.

I trust and believe my deficiencies will be lost in the more perfect and able exposition the subject will receive from those around me, and that graced by the aids of reasoning and eloquence it will be placed in the light it ought to occupy before this Province, our Sister Colonies and the Empire.

I offer no apology—or if any be required, my interest as a Colonist, my duty as a citizen, my country's welfare, and the

well being of our posterity, must plead my excuse for inviting this discussion. Called in the providence of God to take part in the Councils of my country, I have now fulfilled a duty I should have been ill satisfied to have left undone, when my public career shall terminate.

If it be destined that no such union as that contemplated shall be effected, and those who succeed us shall feel the stern alternative of exiling themselves from the land of their birth, because it satisfies not the exigencies of their nature,—or of transferring that land to a foreign nationality—I at least shall have done what in me lies to avert these consequences ;—and if it shall please God to raise up in the northern portion of this great continent a nation of freemen, acknowledging British sovereignty, and advancing with the expansive energy of which Britains are capable and the age demands—rivaling—but with no mean jealousy—rather with a friendly and co-operative spirit, the progress of our republican neighbors—and giving to our children a place among men which their fathers possessed not—then, sir, will it be reward enough for any man that his memory shall be recalled as having been one, although among the humblest, of the pioneers in so great a work.

I move, Sir, the adoption of the resolutions which I read at commencing, and which I now present for the deliberation of the Committee.

